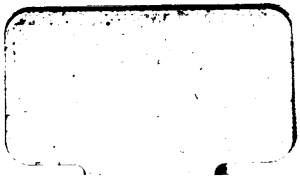

IN PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

BY

COUNT LEO TOLSTOI

TRANSLATED FROM THE RUSSIAN BY

MRS ALINE DELANO

BOSTON

D LOTHROP COMPANY

FRANKLIN AND HAWLEY STREETS

"YOU OWN MUCH LAND," SAID THE ELDER.

P 95

WHERE THERE IS LOVE THERE IS GOD.

MARTIN AVDEYITCH, a shoemaker, lived in the city. He occupied a room on the ground floor, which had but one window opening on the street. From it he could watch the passers-by, and though only their feet were visible, he was able to recognize people by their boots. He had lived there many years, and knew many people. Almost every pair of boots

worn in the neighborhood went through his hands several times. Some he re-soled, and patched, others he re-toed. Sitting by his window he often saw the boots he had made, for he had plenty of work, as he sewed well, used the best of leather, charged moderate prices and kept his word. If he expected to finish the work on time, he took the order, not otherwise, for he promised no more than he could perform. Every body knew him and work never failed him.

He had always been a good man, but now as he grew older he became more anxious about the welfare of his soul, and thus drew nearer to

God. While still an apprentice he lost his wife, who died leaving a three-year-old boy. His other children had not lived, the older ones having died some time before his wife left him. At first, Martin thought of sending his boy to live with his sister in the country; but later he changed his mind. He thought to himself, "It would be hard for my little Kapiton to grow up away from home. I had better keep him with me."

He left his master and took his son to live with him. But it did not please God to leave Avdeyitch any of his children. When the boy grew

older and began to be a help and comfort to his father, he was taken ill, lay in a fever a week or thereabout, then died. Martin buried him and his heart was filled with despair; he even murmured against the Lord and prayed that death might be sent to his relief. He was sick at heart and upbraided the Almighty for not sending death to him, an old man, rather than to his only darling son. He even left off going to church. One day a former village neighbor, who had been travelling for the past eight years, and who was now on his way from Troitza, stopped to pay him a visit. As they were talking mat-

ters over, Avdeyitch poured out his grievances to him.

"I have no wish to live longer; my greatest desire is to die; it is my only prayer: I have nothing to live for." The old man replied:

"You are wrong, Martin; we must not judge God's ways, for we cannot fathom them. As he saw fit for your son to die and for you to live, it must be better thus. If you despair, it is only because you want to live for your own pleasure."

"And for what else should I live?"

"For the glory of God," replied the old man. "He gave you life, and you must live for Him. If you

do so, you will cease troubling yourself about things, and all will seem easy to you."

Martin remained silent for a while. "How should we live for God's glory?" he asked.

"Christ has taught us how to live for God's glory," replied the old man. "You know how to read. Get a Bible and read it; in it you will find out how to live for God's glory. It is all taught there."

These words impressed Avdeyitch. The same day he went out and bought a copy of the New Testament in large print, and began to read it.

At first he intended to read only

on holidays, but after beginning, it made him feel so happy, that he read in it every day. Sometimes he read so late at night that all the oil in his lamp would be burned out, and still he was unwilling to leave off. Thus he read night after night. The more he read the better he understood what God wished him to do, and how to live for God's glory. Martin became more cheerful. Formerly when he went to bed he sighed and groaned, and his mind dwelt on his son; now he only said: "Glory be to God! Glory be to God! Thy will be done!"

From that time Avdeyitch's life

changed. Formerly on holidays he frequented inns, drinking tea, and not refusing a glass of vodka at times, when he took a drink with a friend; and though he did not take enough to become tipsy, yet he would occasionally leave the place somewhat exhilarated, and often talked foolishly. He used to quarrel and dispute with people; but all was now changed, and his life became sweet and peaceful. He worked in the morning, and after working hours were over, he lifted his lamp from its hook, placed it on the table, took his book from the shelf, opened it and read. And the more he read, the better he understood, and

the more cheerful and light-hearted he grew.

Once it happened that he read quite late into the night the Gospel by St. Luke. He was reading the sixth chapter and the following verses: "And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other, and him that taketh away thy cloak, forbid not to take thy coat also. Give to every man that asketh of thee, and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again. And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise."

He read further the verses where the Lord says:

"And why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? Whoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will show you to whom he is like. He is like a man which built a house and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock; and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house and could not shake it; for it was founded upon a rock. But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built a house upon the earth, against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great."

As he read these words his heart rejoiced. He took off his spectacles, put away the book, leaned on the table and meditated. He considered his own life in the light of these words.

"How about my house, is it built on a rock or on sand? It would be well if it were built on a rock. It seems easy when I am alone to do everything as God wills, but as soon as one's mind becomes distracted by worldly matters, one is sure to fall into evil ways. Still I will try. It will make me happy. Lord, help me!"

He sat there thinking, and would have gone to bed, but could not leave the book.

So he continued reading the seventh chapter, about the centurion, the widow's son, and of the answer of St. John's disciples, and reached the place where it tells how the rich Pharisee invited the Lord to his house, and how the woman anointed his feet and washed them with her tears, and was justified. He came to the forty-fourth verse and read:

"And He turned to the woman and said unto Simon: 'Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet; but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss,

but this woman, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint, but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment.'" He read these verses and thought: "Thou gavest me no water for my feet. Thou gavest me no kiss, my head with oil thou didst not anoint."

Again he took off his spectacles, placed them on the Bible and became lost in thought.

"Just such a Pharisee am I. Like me, he thought only of himself,— how to drink tea and how to live in warmth and comfort, instead of thinking about his guest. His thought was only for

himself, and not for his guest. And who was his guest but the Lord Himself. If He had come to visit me, should I have done thus?"

He rested his head on both hands and, unawares, dropped asleep.

Then he seemed to hear distinctly these words: "Martin, Martin!"

He roused himself and said: "Who is there?" Then he turned and looked at the door — there was no one there. Once more he dropped asleep and again he heard distinctly:

"Martin, Martin! Look out into the street to-morrow; I will come."

And once more he roused himself, rose from his chair and rubbed his

eyes. He could not determine whether he had really heard these words, or only dreamed them. He turned out the light and went to bed.

The next morning he rose before daylight, said his prayers, made a fire, prepared the stchi * and kasha,† started his samovar, put on his apron and seated himself at the window to work. Thus he sat working and thinking of what had happened last night. He could not make up his mind whether he had dreamed it or had actually heard the voice.

"Well, such a thing might be possible," he thought.

Thus he sat by the window, looking

* Cabbage soup. † Gruel.

out rather than working, and whenever some one went by wearing unfamiliar boots, he bent down and looked out, so as to see the wearer's face as well. A dvornik * in felt boots passed, next the water-carrier, then an old soldier of the time of Emperor Nicholas, in trimmed felt boots and carrying a shovel. Avdeyitch recognized him by the boots. He was called Stepanitch, and lived at the house of a neighboring merchant as a pensioner. His duty was to help the dvornik. He began clearing off the snow in front of Avdeyitch's window. The shoemaker glanced at him and again resumed his work.

* House porter.

"It must be that I am growing foolish in my old age," thought Avdeyitch. "Stepanitch is clearing the snow and I imagine that Christ is coming to visit me. I am getting to be an old fool." He took ten stitches or more and looking out again, saw that Stepanitch had leaned his shovel against the wall and was either resting or warming himself.

"He is an old weather-beaten man. He has not even the strength to shovel snow," thought Avdeyitch. "Had I not better offer him some tea? by the way, the samovar is about boiling over." Avdeyitch stuck his awl in his work, rose, placed the samovar on the table,

made the tea and tapped on the window. Stepanitch turned and drew nearer the house. Avdeyitch beckoned to him and went to open the door.

"Come in, warm yourself," he said. "You must be cold."

"God bless you! true, my bones are aching," said Stepanitch.

He entered, shook off the snow and wiped his feet, so as not to track the floor. He seemed very feeble.

"Don't stop to wipe your feet; I will sweep up the snow. I am used to it. Come, sit down, and have some tea," said Avdeyitch.

He poured out two glasses and presented one to his guest, who poured

the tea into the saucer and blew on it. After having finished his glass, Stepanitch placed it bottom side up, with the remnant of the sugar-lump on top, and thanked Avdeyitch. It was evident, however, that he wanted more.

"You must take another glass," said Avdeyitch, and he filled the tumblers again, one for himself and for his guest. As he drank he could not help giving an occasional glance into the street.

"Are you expecting any one?" asked his guest.

"Am I? Well, the fact is, I am rather ashamed to acknowledge whom

I expect, and I can hardly call it expecting; but I have been strongly impressed by what I have read. It may have been a vision, I can not say. Last night I was reading the Bible, about our Lord Jesus Christ, how He had lived and suffered among men. Of course you have heard about it?"

"I have, but I cannot read myself."

"Well, as I was reading about His life, I came to the passage which tells about His visit to the Pharisee, who did not welcome Him as he ought to have done. I was reading that, and thought to myself: 'How could this man receive Him thus? For my

part, had He been my guest I would have given him the warmest greeting. The Pharisee, on the contrary, did not give Him a hearty welcome.' As I was thinking it over, I fell asleep, and while I dozed, I heard some one calling me by name. I rose, and it seemed to me that I heard a voice, whispering in my ear twice over: 'Expect Me, I will come to-morrow.' Would you believe that this impressed me so much that still, although I realize how foolish it is, I do expect Him, our dear Lord?" Stepanitch shook his head, but said nothing. He finished his glass and placed it on its side, but Avdeyitch

picked it up and replenished it once more.

"Drink all you like; I suppose when He lived, He did not feel above any body, and mostly kept company with common folk. He selected His disciples from among common working people, like ourselves, miserable sinners. 'Whosoever,' saith our Lord, 'humbleth himself shall be exalted, and he that exalteth himself shall be abased. You call me Lord,' He says, 'and I will wash your feet. Whosoever would be first, let him serve others, for blessed are the poor, and the meek and the merciful."

Stepanitch forgot his tea; he was

an old man, and easily touched. He sat there listening to Avdeyitch, with the tears streaming down his cheeks.

"Have some more, won't you?" said Avdeyitch. But Stepanitch made the sign of the cross, thanked his host, pushed away his tumbler and rose.

"Thank you, Martin Avdeyitch," he said, "you have comforted me indeed, both body and soul."

"You are welcome; come again. I shall always be glad to see you," replied Avdeyitch.

After Stepanitch left, Martin poured out the tea that was left, drank it, put away the dishes, and once more

resumed his work by the window,—finishing the back of the boot. Thus he sat sewing, still occasionally glancing out of the window and expecting Christ; he was thinking of Him and of His works and sayings.

Two soldiers went by, one wearing government boots, and the other those made by himself; then the proprietor of the neighboring house, in shining overshoes, passed by; next came the baker with a basket. Every one went by. And now a woman passed in woollen stockings and country shoes. After passing on she stopped by the wall between the two windows. Avdeyitch looked up and

saw that she was a stranger, poorly clad, and with a baby in her arms. She was standing with her back to the wind, endeavoring to cover the baby with such scanty clothing as she had. Separated by a double window from her as Avdeyitch was, he heard the baby cry, and saw her trying to pacify him, with no success. He rose, opened the door, went up the stairway and called out to her:

"Woman, I say, woman." She heard him and turned.

"Don't stand there in the cold with the child, come in this way, where you can better cover your baby. This way."

The woman looked at him in surprise. She saw an old man wearing an apron and spectacles, who was calling her in. She followed him.

Descending the stairway she entered the room. Pointing toward the bed, Avdeyitch said to her: "Sit down there, nearer to the oven, where you can warm yourself and nurse the baby."

"I have no milk! I have not eaten since morning," replied the woman. Still she took the baby and nursed him. Avdeyitch shook his head, went to the table, took a loaf of bread and a bowl, opened the oven door, poured out some stchi into the

bowl, and reached the pot with the kasha, but as it was not quite ready, he could only offer the stchi; he put a plate on the table, cut the bread and spread a napkin.

"Sit down there," he said; "eat something, while I watch the baby. I have had children myself, and I know how to take care of them."

The woman made the sign of the cross, seated herself at the table and began to eat, while Avdeyitch sat on the edge of the bed, watching the baby. He tried to make cooing sounds with his lips, but he was toothless and could not do it very well, and as the baby was still crying

he thought of amusing him by shaking his finger. He first raised it, and then put it close to the baby's mouth. He was afraid to let the little lips have it, for the finger was blackened from shoemaker's work. The baby noticed the finger and gradually stopped crying; he even laughed, and made Avdeyitch feel very happy. Meanwhile the woman went on eating and telling the story of her life.

"I am a soldier's wife," she said; "eight months ago my husband was sent off somewhere, far away; so far, in fact, that I have had from him no word whatever. I have been living as a cook, but when I gave birth to

this child they would not keep me and the baby, too. It is three months since I lost my place, and my money is all spent. I would have liked to hire out as a wet-nurse, but no one would take me; they said I was too thin. I have just called on a merchant's wife, where our grandmother lives, who promised to hire me, and I thought that she was ready for me now, but was told to come next week. She lives far from here. I am very tired, and the baby is so, too. It is a mercy that the mistress of the house we live in, takes pity on us and allows us to remain. I don't know what would have become of us otherwise."

Avdeyitch sighed and said: — "Haven't you any warmer clothing?"

"Don't speak of it! I pawned my last shawl for twenty copecks, yesterday."

The woman then rose, and going to the bed, took the baby. Avdeyitch rose also, went to the cupboard, rummaged about in it, and brought out an old coat.

"There," he said, "it is old, but it may do to wrap up the baby."

The woman looked at it, then at the old man, took it, and burst into tears.

Avdeyitch turned his back, reached under the bed, pulled out a trunk,

searched in it and again seated himself opposite the woman.

"God bless you, grandfather," she said, "the Lord must have sent me by your window. My baby would have frozen. When I left the house it was quite mild. How cold it has grown since! He must have put it in your thoughts to look out and pity me, poor soul that I am!"

Avdeyitch smiled and said, "You are right; it was He who sent me. I had my reason for looking out of the window." And he related his dream and how he heard the voice telling him that the Lord would visit him that day.

"It may all be," said the woman; she rose, put on the coat, wrapping it over her baby and thanking Avdeyitch repeatedly.

"Take this for Christ's sake, to redeem your shawl," said Avdeyitch, and he gave her twenty copecks. Both made the sign of the cross, and Avdeyitch bade her good-by.

After she was gone, he ate some stchi, put his room in order and once more resumed his work. He continued to sew, still glancing at the window. Whenever a shadow flitted across, he invariably looked out and saw who went by. Both strangers and acquaintances passed along, but

no one that he was expecting, in particular.

After a while he saw an old pedler woman stopping in front of his window. She carried a tray of apples, of which but few remained, as her stock was nearly sold out. A bag of chips was slung across her shoulders; she must have gathered them in some place where building was going on, and was now carrying them home. Evidently the load tired her shoulder, for she stopped to throw it across the other one. Lowering the bag to the sidewalk, she placed the apple-tray on a post and began

to press down the chips. While she was thus busy, a boy in a ragged cap dashed round the corner, seized an apple off the tray, and was about to escape, when the old woman noticed him, and turning round caught him by the sleeve. The boy struggled, trying to escape, but the woman held him fast with both hands. His cap was knocked off and she held him by the hair. The boy was screaming and the woman scolding. Avdeyitch did not stop even to stick his needle into his work; he threw it on the floor and ran out, dropping his spectacles as he stumbled up the stairway. When he was out in the

street he saw that the old woman was pulling the boy's hair and scolding him, — threatening to give him in charge of the police, whilst the boy still struggled and denied the theft. "I did not take it," he said, "what are you beating me for? Let me go." Avdeyitch interfered and separated them. He took the boy's hands in his and said to the woman, "Let him go, Grandmother; forgive him for Christ's sake."

"I will forgive him in a way that he will never forget! I will take this rascal to the police station!"

Again Avdeyitch interceded for the boy.

"Let him go, Grandmother. He never will do so again. Let him go for Christ's sake."

The woman loosened her grasp. The boy was about to run away, but Avdeyitch stopped him.

"Ask the grandmother's pardon, and never do so again. I saw you take the apple."

The boy cried, and asked the woman's forgiveness.

"That's right. And now here's an apple for you."

Avdeyitch took an apple from the tray and gave it to the boy. "I will pay you, Grandmother," he said to the woman.

"You will spoil the rascals," she said. "He ought to be punished so as to be made to remember it for a week."

"Not so, Grandmother," said Avdeyitch. "It might be right according to our laws, but not according to God's mercy. If he ought to be flogged for taking an apple, what ought to be done with us for our sins?"

The woman was silent.

And Avdeyitch told her the parable about the debtor and the creditor, how the creditor remitted a large debt to his debtor, who in his turn oppressed his debtor. Both the woman and the boy listened to him.

"God wishes us to forgive," said Avdeyitch, "else we shall not be forgiven. He wanted us to forgive every one, and especially our weaker brothers."

The woman shook her head and sighed.

"You may be right, but you know how roguish they are."

"Then it is for old people like us to teach them," replied Avdeyitch.

"That is what I say," she rejoined. "I have seven children, and have only one daughter left." And she told him where she lived with her daughter, and how many grandchildren she had. "You see, I am rather

feeble now," she said, "but still I work. I do it to help the children, and good grandchildren they are; they are always glad to see me. Aksutka will not leave me when I am home. It is always, 'Grandmother, dear grandmother, my darling' . . . . " And the old woman was quite overcome. "To be sure he is only a child, God bless him," she added, looking at the boy.

As she was about to lift her bag, the boy ran up, saying:

"Let me carry it, Grandmother; it's on my way." The woman wonderingly shook her head, but allowed him to take the bag.

Thus they started down the street, side by side. She even forgot to claim the money that Avdeyitch was to pay her for the apple. He remained on the spot some time, looking after them and trying to catch their conversation as they went away.

When they were quite out of sight, he went in, found his spectacles safe on the stairway, picked up the needle and once more resumed his work. Presently it began to grow dark, so he could no longer see to sew, and noticing the lamplighter go by to light the street lamps, he trimmed his own lamp, hung it up and again sat down to work. He had finished

one boot, and on looking it over was satisfied with the work. After he had put away the tools, and swept up the trimmings, he folded his materials, took down the lamp and placed it on the table. Then he opened the Bible, intending to read where he had left off the night before, but it happened to open at another page. Just then he remembered his dream, and as he thought of it he seemed to hear some one behind him. He turned, and in the dark corner beheld a form; yet he was unable to distinguish the face.

And a voice came whispering in his ear:

"Don't you know me, Martin?"

"Who is it?" he said.

"It is I," said the voice. And the form of the old soldier came forth from the corner, smiled, and vanished like a cloud.

"And this is I," said the voice. And the woman with the baby appeared; she also smiled, and the child laughed. And they too vanished. "And this is I," the voice went on; and the old woman and the boy stepped out, smiling, and vanished likewise.

Avdeyitch felt happy. He made the sign of the cross, put on his spectacles, and read the Bible just where it opened:

"I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in." And at the bottom of the page he read:

"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

And Avdeyitch understood that his dream had come true; that the Saviour had indeed visited him that day, and that he had welcomed Him in truth.

HOW MUCH LAND A MAN NEEDS.

I.

An elder sister from the city was visiting a younger sister in the country. The elder married a merchant, and the younger a peasant. While they were drinking tea and chatting, the elder began to boast of her city life, telling how well she lived, and how neatly she dressed herself and

her children; how bountifully she ate and drank, and how she went to theatres and entertainments.

The younger sister, whose pride was touched, criticised the life of trades-people and praised her own peasant life. "I would not change places with you," she said. "Although we live plainly, we fear no one. You live better, but you either gain a great deal, or lose all you have. It may happen that you are rich one day and poor the next. We run no risk in our business. 'A peasant's stomach is lean, but roomy;' we shall not become rich, but shall always have enough."

The elder sister replied: "Yes, you have enough to eat, it is true, like pigs and calves; but no household comforts, no gentle manners. No matter how much your husband toils, you will live and die in squalor, and your children will fare no better."

"What of that? It is our life. But we are safe, and so long as we own land, we are beholden to and fear no one. In the city you live surrounded by temptations; to-day you are safe, and to-morrow perhaps the Evil One may tempt your husband by cards, or wine, or women. Then all is lost. Don't such things happen?"

Pahom, the master of the house, was lying on the back of the brick oven, listening attentively to their conversation.

"That's true," he said, "as we have to work from early childhood, no nonsense enters our heads. True, we have not enough land, but if we had, I would fear no one, not the Evil One himself."

The women finished their tea, put away the dishes and went to bed.

In the meantime the devil was hidden behind the oven. He heard what was said, and rejoiced that the peasant's wife had made her husband boast and say that did he but own

more land, the devil himself could not get him.

"All right," he thought, "we shall see. I will give you more land; that will be the very way to get you."

II.

THE land of the peasants bordered on that of a lady proprietor, who owned about one hundred and twenty dessiatins. She lived in peace with the peasants, until a retired soldier became her steward, and imposed upon them by fines. No matter how careful Pahom might be, it was either a horse, found in the oats, or a cow that had wandered into the garden, or calves taken on the meadow, — always a fine. Pahom payed the fines, vent-

ing his wrath on his family. Often did the old steward provoke Pahom to sin, so when it came time to house the cattle, he was indeed thankful. Although he begrudged the fodder, there would, at least, be no further cause for anxiety.

In the winter, a rumor spread that the lady wished to sell the land, and that a stranger wanted to buy it. This aroused the peasants; they thought that should the land fall into the hands of a stranger, he might fine them more heavily than the lady.

"We cannot live without that land," they thought, "it surrounds us."

They went to the lady and asked

her not to sell the land to a stranger, but to them, promising to pay more for it, and she agreed. At first they intended to buy up the whole of the land in common, and held several meetings for that purpose, but nothing could be settled. The Evil One had his finger in the pie and prevented them from agreeing. Finally they decided to buy it in separate lots, each one to buy as much as he was able, — and to this the lady consented. Pahom heard that his neighbors had bought twenty dessiatins and that the lady was to receive half the money by installments, to be paid in the course of two years. He en-

vied them. "I am afraid they will buy all the land, and I shall get nothing," he thought. He consulted his wife. "People are buying," he said, "we also had better buy about ten dessiatins. I don't see how we are to get on without it; the steward with his fines will be the death of us." They thought the matter over.

Already Pahom had saved one hundred roubles, then the foal was sold, half the bees, and their son hired out to work. In this way they collected half the money.

Pahom took it, selected fifteen dessiatins, including some wood land, and went to the lady. The bargain was

made, and he paid part of the cash down. They went to town, and had the title deed drawn up. Pahom paid half of the purchase money, promising to pay the remaining half in two years. Thus he became a landed proprietor. Having borrowed some money from his brother-in-law, with which to buy seeds, he sowed the new land and reaped a good harvest. In a year's time he repaid both the lady and his brother-in-law. Now he ploughed and sowed his own land, and pastured his cattle on it. As he was starting to plough, or going to look at the grass, or inspecting his meadow-land —his heart rejoiced. Even the grass

and the flowers seemed to him different and better. Formerly whenever he passed that lot, he looked on it as he did on any other piece of land; now it was quite another matter, and it looked different to Pahom.

III.

THUS he lived and thrived. All went well with one exception. The peasants would trespass on his fields. He warned them repeatedly, but to no purpose; once it was through the carelessness of the shepherd, another time the horses trampled the wheat in the night. Pahom drove them off and forgave them again and again. Finally he could endure it no longer, and complained of the trespasses. Although he knew they were not inten-

tional, yet he thought: "It will not do to forgive always. If I don't look out, they will trample the whole of my land; they must be made to know better in the future."

He sued them several times and made them pay fines. His neighbors resented this and sometimes injured his fields intentionally. One night some one went into his wood-lot, cut down ten lindens, and peeled the bark for the purpose of making shoes. The next time that Pahom approached the spot, he perceived that the light came through the trees more freely. When he reached it, he saw the felled trees on the ground near the stumps. If

they had only cut the outside ones! But there they were, one only left standing, and the remaining ten lay in a row, stripped of their bark. Pahom was vexed. "I wish I could find out who did this," he thought. "Wouldn't I pay him back!" He tried to think who it might be. "It must be Simon, no one else would do it." He went to Simon's house, searched everywhere, but found nothing. However, he was more confident than ever that it was Simon who had done it; he appealed to the law. Simon was summoned, and after a trial was acquitted, for lack of proof. This vexed Pahom still more. He insulted

the judge and the foreman. "You shield thieves," he said; "if you were honest men, you would not acquit them."

In this way Pahom quarrelled with his neighbors and the judges. Although he had land enough, yet he had lost the good-will of his neighbors. About that time it was said that people were settling on new lands. Pahom thought, "I would not care to leave my own land, but if our people went, it would give us more room. We are getting crowded here."

Once as he was sitting in the house, a travelling peasant stepped in. They fed him, and allowed him to spend

the night. In the course of the conversation, Pahom asked him whence he came. The traveller replied that he came from the South, — from the Volga, — where he had been working. As they sat chatting together, he told how people were beginning to settle there; how some of the peasants of his village had joined the community there, and had ten dessiatins given to each. "The land was such," he said, "that when they sowed rye, it came up high enough to hide a horse, and thick enough for five handfuls to make a sheaf. A peasant who had come there a poor man, now cultivated fifty dessiatins. Last year he

cleared five thousand roubles on wheat alone."

Pahom became excited. He thought: "Why should we suffer and be crowded here, when we could live well there? I will dispose of my house and land, and with that money will start afresh. I want more room. But I had better find out about the new place for myself."

Late in the spring he started, and descended the Volga to Samara in a steamer. From there he travelled on foot for about four hundred versts, and finally reached his destination. There he found things as he had been told. The peasants were living com-

fortably; each had ten dessiatins of land given him and was made welcome. If any one had money he could buy as much more as he wanted. The best land was to be had for three roubles a dessiatin.

After Pahom had made all the inquiries he returned home and began selling out. The land brought more than he paid for it; he also disposed of the house and cattle, and leaving the community the following spring, started with his family for the new lands.

IV.

On his arrival he joined a large settlement, treated the old men, had his papers righted, and was received into the new community. Fifty dessiatins were given him, for the five members of his family, besides pasture lands. He built a house and bought cattle. Now he owned twice the amount of land that he owned formerly, — rich land, moreover. His living also improved. He had abundance of cultivated and meadow lands

and could raise as many cattle as he wanted. At first, while building, he was much pleased. Later, he found the region more settled than he anticipated. Besides, he was anxious to raise wheat, like others, and land suitable for that purpose was scarce, for wheat is raised either on virgin soil, or on land that has lain fallow for some time. It is generally raised one year, then the land is allowed to lie fallow the two following years. Light soil was plenty, but it is only good for rye; wheat on the contrary requires rich soil, which was in great demand, there being not enough of it for all. Consequently many dis-

putes arose. The rich peasants cultivated their best lands themselves, and the poorer ones hired theirs to the merchants, who paid their taxes. The first year, Pahom sowed wheat on the land which he had received, and it yielded well. This made him anxious to sow more; but he had no land for that purpose, — for what he had was not suitable. He longed to own more, and so hired some of a merchant. This also yielded well, but the wheat had to be carted to the village, a distance of about fifteen versts. Around him the merchant-peasants were living on their farms, growing rich.

"What a good thing it would be," he thought, "if I could buy land of my own, and build a house on it. How handy that would be." And he thought how well it would be, if he were only able to do so.

Thus he lived five years. He hired more land and sowed it with wheat. The years were prosperous, — the crops fine, and Pahom made money. Now he lived well. Still he was dissatisfied at having to buy land gradually, or to be troubled in any way about it. For instance, whenever there was good land to be had, the peasants hired it at once, giving no one time to buy it, and so prevented

him from getting what he wanted. Once he with a merchant did buy a meadow, and they had already ploughed it, but the former owners went back on their bargain, and so all their labor was lost. If he only possessed land in his own right, he would be beholden to nobody and would envy no one.

Pahom made inquiries as to where he could buy more land for himself. Finally he came across a peasant who was selling cheap, five hundred dessiatins, because he was insolvent and could not afford to keep them. They had almost reached an understanding and were about to conclude the bargain

for fifteen hundred roubles, — the peasants to wait for half the money, — when a travelling merchant stopped at Pahom's house to rest and feed his horses.

As they sat drinking tea and chatting, the merchant told Pahom that he was on his way from the lands of the Bashkirs, where he had purchased some five hundred dessiatins, for which he only paid one thousand roubles.

Pahom questioned him further, and the merchant told him how he had made friends with the Elders, having distributed a hundred roubles' worth of dressing-gowns and carpets,

and a chest of tea, and how he had treated them with wine. The land cost him on an average some twenty copecks a dessiatin. He showed the deed and told Pahom that it bordered on a stream and was fine meadow land, and as Pahom continued to question him, —

"There is plenty of land there," he said. "One cannot go over it in a year's time. It all belongs to the Bashkirs, and the people are not intelligent; they are more like sheep. I dare say you might get the land for nothing."

Thus Pahom came to the conclusion that it would be unwise for him

to pay a thousand roubles for five hundred dessiatins, and shoulder a debt besides, when he could easily get ever so much more for the same money.

V.

PAHOM inquired how he could get there, and as soon as the merchant was gone, made preparations for starting. He left his wife at home, and took only his workman. They stopped in town, bought a chest of tea, some presents and wine, just as the merchant had advised, then after travelling five hundred versts, came on the seventh day to the lands of the Bashkirs.

Every thing proved to be as the

merchant had told them. They found the people on the steppe by the side of a river living in felt-covered carts; they ate no bread, and did not cultivate their lands. The cattle and horses were roaming about; the foals were tied to the carts and the mares were driven to them twice a day. The Bashkirs milked the mares and made koumiss out of the milk. The women prepared it, while the men did nothing but drink tea and koumiss, eat mutton and play the dudine. They looked sleek and jolly, and all summer long lived without care. They were ignorant and did not speak Russian, but were quite good-natured.

As soon as they saw Pahom, they surrounded him, and an interpreter was found. Pahom said that he had come to buy land. This pleased them; Pahom was invited into their best cart, seated on carpets and supported with down pillows. Tea and koumiss were offered him, a sheep was slain and he was regaled with mutton. Then he took out his presents and distributed them. The Bashkirs were greatly pleased. They assembled and told the interpreter to tell Pahom this:

"They wish me to tell you," said the interpreter, "that they are pleased with you, and that it is our custom to

honor our guests, and to make returns for their gifts. You have been generous to us, — now tell us what you would like to have."

"I would like best of all some of your land. We are rather crowded on ours, and besides, it is exhausted. You have plenty of it, and it is rich. I have never seen any like it."

The interpreter translated his words, and the people talked the matter over. Pahom could not understand what they said; he only saw them talking and laughing. Finally they were silent. All looked at him, while the interpreter said:

"They wish me to tell you, that

they are willing to give you all the land you like. Just point out which suits you best, and it is yours." Again they talked the matter over, and Pahom saw that they were not agreed. He asked the interpreter what they were disputing about, and he told him that some said they ought to ask the Elder's permission, and that they could not give away land without his consent, and others said that they could act without consulting him.

VI.

WHILE they were still discussing this, a man wearing a cap of fox fur, was seen approaching. All rose and became silent. The interpreter said, "This is our Elder."

Pahom at once took the richest dressing-gown and five pounds of tea, and presented them to him. He accepted the gifts, and when he had taken the seat of honor, the Bashkirs at once proceeded to explain matters to him. He heard it all, smiled, and said in

Russian, "Why not? Take whatever suits you. We have plenty of land."

"How can I take it?" thought Pahom; "it ought to be deeded. They might say now it is mine, and later take it away from me."

"I am very grateful to you," he said. "It is true you have plenty of land, and I want but little. I would like to know, however, just how much will be mine. It had better be measured and a title deed drawn up. You know we are all liable to die at any moment, and although you are a kind people to give me the land, your children may take it away from me."

The Elder laughed. "We will give

you the title, and will deed it as firmly as possible."

"I heard that a merchant visited you, and that you also gave him land and a title deed. I should like the same."

The Elder understood what he meant and said, "We can arrange all that; we have a clerk, and can go in town and affix the necessary seals."

"And what will be the price?" asked Pahom.

"We have but one price — a thousand roubles a day."

Pahom did not understand this. "How many dessiatins will that make?" he asked.

"We do not know how to measure,"

replied the Elder; "our price is for the day. As much as you can travel around in one day is yours; that is our way of measuring, and the price is one thousand roubles."

Pahom was surprised. "That will be a great deal," he said; "one can make a wide circuit in a day."

The Elder laughed. "It will all be yours, on one condition, namely, that if you do not return on the same day to the place you started from, you will forfeit your money."

"But how shall you know where I go?"

"We will remain on the spot from whence you start; you will go and

make the circuit, and our men will follow you on horseback. Wherever you say, there they will plant poles, and afterwards we will plough it from pole to pole. You can make the circuit as wide as you like; only you must return before sunset to the spot you start from. What you encircle is to be yours."

Pahom agreed, and decided to start early. They chatted awhile, drank tea and koumiss, ate more mutton, and at night Pahom was put on a feather bed, the Bashkirs promising to be ready at the place agreed upon, at daybreak.

"WHAT YOU ENCIRCLE IS YOURS."

p 80

VII.

PAHOM stretched himself out on the feather bed, but could not fall asleep. He was thinking about the land, and what he would do with it. "Promised Land, indeed," he thought. "I can easily make a circuit of fifty versts. The days are long now, and there ought to be ten thousand dessiatins in it. Then I will be beholden to no one. I can buy two teams of oxen, hire two workmen, and cultivate the best land, using the rest for pasture."

He was unable to drop to sleep, and only before dawn managed to snatch a few winks. Hardly had he fallen asleep when he had a dream. He dreamt he was lying in the same tent, and that he heard some one outside laughing. Wishing to find out who it was, he went out, and saw the Elder with both hands on his stomach, sitting and laughing with all his might. Just as Pahom approached him, asking what he was laughing about, he saw that it was not the Elder, but the merchant who had stopped at his house, and had told him about the land. As he was about to ask him when he had

come there, he saw it was the merchant no longer, but the peasant who had rested at his house formerly. And he, also, changed and became a devil with horns and hoofs, who sat there laughing. Pahom thought, "What can he be looking at and laughing?" He went towards him and saw a man lying on the ground, barefooted, with only a shirt and drawers on, and as white as a sheet. As he examined him closer he recognized himself; he woke up. "Queer dreams," he thought, and looked out. He saw the daylight breaking, and knew that it must be time to start and wake the others.

VIII.

PAHOM arose, roused his workman and told him to harness, then went to wake the Bashkirs. "It is time to start," he said. They arose, assembled, and the Elder arrived. Again they drank koumiss and wanted to treat Pahom with tea, but he refused and said, "If we are going, it is time we were on our way."

The Bashkirs got ready, mounted their horses and started, Pahom with his workman following in his cart.

When they arrived at the steppe, the day was beginning to break. They ascended a hillock, got out of their teams and formed a group. The Elder pointed out to Pahom the land. "This is all ours," he said, "choose."

Pahom's eyes sparkled. Fine, rich meadows, as even as the palm of one's hand. Wherever there was a ravine, there the variety of vegetation was still greater, and the grass stood as high as one's chest. The Elder took off his fur cap and placed it on the top of the hillock.

"Here is the mark," he said. "Put your money on it. Your man

will stay here; start from here and return. All you encircle is yours."

Pahom took out the money, placed it on the hat, took off his caftan, tightened his belt, put his bag containing bread, in his breast pocket, fastened a brandy flask to his belt, pulled up his boots and prepared to start. He was puzzled to decide which direction he had better take; the land looked good everywhere.

"It makes no difference," he thought; "I will go towards the spot where the sun rises." He turned towards the east and waited until it should appear above the horizon. "One had better lose no time, and it is

easier to walk when it is cool," he thought.

The Bashkir riders also climbed the hillock and placed themselves behind him. As soon as the sun showed itself, Pahom started on his journey, the horsemen following. He walked leisurely at first. After he had made five versts, he had a pole planted. As he went on, he increased his speed. A verst more, and another pole was planted. He glanced at the sun; the hillock was in sight, and the people on it. Pahom guessed that he had travelled about five versts. He went on and made five more. He felt warm, and

took off his coat, then went on again and made another five versts. It was warm. He glanced once more at the sun and saw that it was time to think about lunch.

"A quarter of the day is past, and there are four of them," he thought. "It is too early to turn; let me pull off my boots." He sat down, took them off, then started on again. Now he travelled with ease. "Five more and I shall turn to the left. This is a fine spot; it would be a pity to leave it. The further I go, the better it is." And so he continued to walk straight ahead. Looking back at the hillock it was

scarcely visible, and the people on it looked like ants.

"I have walked enough in this direction, and must turn now. I am hot and thirsty." He raised his flask and drank a draught, ordered a pole to be planted, and turned sharply to the left. As he went on, the grass grew higher, the sun hotter, and he himself became more and more weary. Looking at the sun he saw that it was the dinner-hour. He ate some bread, but did not stop to rest. "If I should sit down, I should be likely presently to lie down and fall asleep," he thought.

He stood still awhile, then started

on further. At first he walked easier; the food had strengthened him, but it was very hot now, and he was very tired and sleepy. "An hour to bear, a lifetime to live," he thought. He made about ten versts in this direction and as he was about to turn to his left, noticed a rich damp hollow.. "It would be too bad to leave this out; flax would grow finely here," and he still kept on. He took in the hollow, had a pole planted, and then turned the second corner. The people on the hillock were scarcely visible. "I have made the sides too long," he thought, "and had better make this one shorter."

It was almost noon by the sun, and he had only made two versts on the third side. Still fifteen remained as before. "Although my lot will not be square, I must take care to make a direct line and not take in any more. I have quite enough as it is." And he aimed straight for the hillock.

IX.

He was exhausted. His feet were sore, his gait unsteady; he would have liked to rest, but did not dare, lest he might not be able to reach the hill by sunset. The sun does not wait; it sets as though some one was hurrying it.

"Have I miscalculated and taken in too much?" thought Pahom. "What if I am late? It is still far away, and I am tired. I fear my expense is in vain. I must exert myself."

He started on the run. His feet were bleeding, yet he kept on, and still it was far away. He threw away his coat, boots, flask and hat. "I have been greedy, and lost it all," he thought; "I cannot reach the place before sunset;" but still he kept on.

His shirt and drawers stuck to his body, his mouth was parched; bellows seemed to blow in his chest; his heart beat violently, and his feet scarcely supported him. He thought no more of the land—his only thought was of his life. He did not want to die, and yet he could not stop. "If I give up now, after run-

ning so far, they will call me a fool."

He heard the yells and hoots of the Bashkirs. Their shrieks made his heart beat faster. He ran with waning strength, while the setting sun approached the edge of the horizon. Only a little more remained. He saw the people on the hillock waving their hands and urging him on, he saw the fur hat with the money lying on it, and the Elder seated on the ground, holding on to his stomach. He remembered his dream. "I have plenty of land, but shall I ever live on it? I am lost," he thought. And yet he kept on.

He glanced at the sun; it looked large and red, and had almost reached the edge of the horizon. Now it was setting. He reached the hillock —the sun had set. Pahom was in despair. "All is lost," he thought. Just then it flashed upon him that though he could not see the sun from below, it was still visible from the hillock. He ran up. As he reached the summit, he saw the hat. There it was. Then he slipped and fell. As he did so, he reached the hat with his hands.

"Good for you," said the Elder. "You own much land."

Pahom's workman ran towards him

and was about to raise him, when he saw blood pouring from his mouth. Pahom was dead. The workman was thunderstruck.

The Elder crouching on the ground, and holding on to his stomach, was laughing immoderately. Finally he rose, lifted a shovel from the ground and tossed it to Pahom's man. "Bury him," he said.

The Bashkirs started and rode away. Pahom's workman remained. He dug a grave three arshines long, just long enough for Pahom, and buried him.

THE TWO PILGRIMS.

I.

Two old men had made their plans to go to ancient Jerusalem on a pilgrimage. One was a well-to-do peasant, by the name of Yefìm Tarà-sitch Shevelòv, and the other a man of moderate means, called Elisha Bodròv.

Yefìm was a much respected peasant; steady and well-principled; a man who neither drank, smoked, took

snuff, nor used profane language. Having served two terms as Stàrosta, he had resigned without finding himself in debt. His family consisted of two sons and a married grandson, who all lived together. He wore a full beard, carried himself erect, and though almost seventy years old, was in robust health and had few gray hairs.

Elisha was neither poor nor rich. He had worked as a carpenter away from his village, but now that he had grown old, he remained at home and made a living by raising bees. One of his sons worked occasionally away from home, while the other

stayed and helped his father. Elisha had a kind heart and a cheerful disposition. He used snuff, sometimes took a glass of brandy, and was very fond of singing. On the whole he was an inoffensive man and lived in peace with his family, and his neighbors. He was rather short, dark-complexioned and wore a curly beard, and was bald-headed like the prophet Elisha, his patron saint.

A long time ago, the two old men had made a vow, agreeing to go together to Jerusalem, but somehow Taràsitch was always busy. There was no end to his cares. As soon as one thing was off his mind,

another took its place: first it was a son to marry; then his younger son, a soldier, was expected home; then a new hut was to be built; and so on.

Once, on a holiday, the old men met, and seated themselves together on a pile of lumber.

"Well," said Elisha, "when shall we start on our journey, to fulfil our vow?"

Yefîm frowned. "I should prefer to wait; this has been a hard year for me. You know I am building a new hut; I thought it might cost me a little over a hundred roubles, and it has already cost more than

two hundred, and is not nearly finished yet. We had better put it off till next summer. Then, God willing, we will certainly start."

"I think that we ought not to defer it any longer. Spring is just the time to start."

"That may be, but having once begun my hut, how can I leave it unfinished?"

"Your son will finish it."

"Yes; and how will he finish it? You know he is not to be depended on . . . . he drinks."

"But, my good man, when we die, they will have to do without us; your son may as well begin to learn now."

"You are right. Still one feels anxious to finish what one has undertaken."

"Ah, my dear fellow, it is impossible to finish everything. Let me tell you, the other day at our house, while the women were cleaning and scrubbing one thing and another, still obliged to leave some things undone, my eldest son's wife, a clever woman, said: 'It is a good thing that the holiday does not wait for us, for we never should be ready for it.'"

Taràsitch became thoughtful. "I have used a great deal of money in building this hut," he said, "and I

cannot start with an empty purse. One hundred roubles is no trifling sum."

Elisha laughed. "Don't pretend you haven't it," he said. "You are ten times as rich as I am, yet you grumble about money. Only name the day when we are to start. I have no money now, but will contrive to get some by that time."

Taràsitch also smiled. "I confess I did not know you to be a rich man. Pray, where will you get the money?"

"I will get as much as I can at home, and as to the rest . . . . well, I will sell my neighbor a dozen bee-

hives that are now on exhibition. He wanted them a long time ago."

"If the swarm is fine, you will regret it."

"Regret it? O, no! I have never regretted anything in my life but my sins. Nothing is so precious as one's soul."

"That may be; still it is not pleasant to have things all going wrong at home."

"But when matters are going wrong in our soul, that is still worse. Since we made the vow, we ought to go. Don't you think so?"

II.

THUS Elisha sought to persuade his friend. After considering the matter over night, Taràsitch came to him and said:

"You are right. We ought to start. One can never tell when death may overtake us. We must go while we live and have our strength."

In a week's time they were ready. Taràsitch had money at home. He took one hundred roubles, leaving two hundred to his wife. Elisha like-

wise made his preparations. He sold his neighbor ten hives that had been on exhibition, and also the increase of ten more, the whole for seventy roubles. The remaining thirty he obtained from different members of his family. His wife gave the last she had — money which she had put by for her burial; his daughter-in-law also brought him hers.

Yefîm left all necessary directions with his son — as to how many fields to hire for haying, where to spread the dressing, and how to finish and roof the hut. He thought of everything, and left every possible order. Elisha only told his wife to be sure

and separate the young bees from the old ones, and to give them all honestly to his neighbor. He gave no orders about household affairs. "In these matters," he said, "you must be guided by circumstances. You will be your own masters, and will suit yourselves."

Thus they were ready to start. Their wives baked cakes for them, made bags to carry their clothing, including several pairs of shoes, and cut strips of cloth for swathing their feet. Then, bidding good-by to their friends, who accompanied them as far as the village gate, the old men set out on their journey. Elisha started

in a cheerful mood, and as soon as he left the village, he forgot all his cares, thinking only how he might please his comrade, and avoid speaking a harsh word to any one, so as to make the journey in love and peace. On the way he either said his prayers, or repeated from memory the lives of Saints. Whenever he came in contact with people, or put up at night in some house, his only thought was to greet every one cordially and speak a kind word to all. Thus he went on his way rejoicing. Yet there was one thing that he could not give up. He had intended to stop taking snuff, and had even left his snuff-box

at home, but he craved his accustomed pinch, and a stranger on the road had given him some. So in order that he might not lead his comrade into temptation, he lagged behind occasionally and indulged himself.

Yefîm, too, was in good spirits. He travelled steadily, was dignified, and did not indulge in idle talk; yet he felt uneasy in his mind about his people at home. He could not help thinking about them, wondering how they were getting on, trying to recollect whether he had given this or that order to his son, and doubting if his son would carry out everything.

as he wished. If he saw potatoes planted, or dressing carted, he invariably thought: "Is my son doing as I told him? I wish I could be there to show him, or to do it myself."

III.

THUS they travelled five weeks. By that time all their home-made shoes had given out, and they had to buy new ones. They had now come to Little Russia. In the beginning of their journey, and in their own neighborhood, they always paid for their dinner and night's lodging, but when they came to Little Russia they were generally invited by the people to tarry with them without pay. Not only were they freely

lodged and fed, but they often had bread and cakes given them to take on their way. Thus they made some seven hundred versts, and had crossed another government.

Presently they came to a district where the crops had failed, and although they were still invited to spend the night free of expense, their money being refused, yet they were no longer fed. Here even bread was obtained with difficulty, though they were willing to pay for it. They were told that last year the crops had failed altogether. The rich peasants were ruined, having sold all they possessed; many who had been com-

fortably off, were left in poverty, and those who were poor before, had been obliged either to leave their homes altogether, or to become beggars. Only a few remained at home, subsisting on bran and roots through the winter.

One morning after stopping all night in a village where they bought a large supply of bread, they started before dawn, so as to avoid travelling during the heat of the day. Having walked some ten versts, they came to a brook where they paused to rest, and filling their cups with water they soaked their bread in it and ate their lunch. After resting,

bathing and dressing their feet again, Elisha took his snuff-box out. Taràsitch shook his head.

"Why don't you give it up?" he said.

"It has got the better of me," replied Elisha, waving his hand in despair. "I can not help it!"

They rose and went on. Having made ten versts more they came to a large village which they passed without stopping. By that time it had grown very warm. Elisha was tired, and would have liked to rest and get a drink of water, but Taràsitch still kept on. He was a stronger man and a better walker than Elisha,

who found it difficult to keep up with him.

"I should like to get a drink of water," said Elisha.

"Go and get it, then; I am not thirsty."

Elisha stopped.

"Don't wait for me," he said; "I will step into this hut and ask for some; then I will join you presently."

"All right," replied Yefim, and he continued on his way, while Elisha ran into the hut.

It was a small clay hut with a dark foundation, painted white half-way up; the clay was crumbling away. It had

evidently not been repaired for a long time, and the roof was open on one side. The entrance being from the yard, Elisha went in and saw a man beardless and emaciated, lying on a bench beside the house, with his shirt tucked into his trousers, after the fashion of Little Russia; although he had evidently stretched himself out there to be in the shade, the sun was at that moment shining full on him; and though wide awake, he had not moved. Elisha asked him for water, but receiving no reply, 'He is either sick or sulky,' he thought to himself, and went to the door. He heard a child crying inside the hut, and lift-

ing the knocker, he rapped. "Friends!" he called. No one answered. He knocked again with his staff. "Christians!" No reply. "Servants of the Lord!" No sound.

He was about to desist, when he heard somebody groaning inside. "A misfortune may have happened there, I had better look in," he thought.

IV.

LIFTING the latch he found the door unfastened. He opened it and crossed the porch. The inside door was ajar; on the left of the room he saw an oven, and on the right were images, a table and a bench.

An old woman, bareheaded, and wearing only one scanty garment, sat on the bench. Beside her a thin, waxen-looking boy was crying and pulling her by the sleeve, begging her to give him some bread.

Elisha entered. He saw another woman behind the oven, apparently in convulsions. She was lying with her face down, and was making a rattling sound. Perceiving a stranger, the old woman raised her head.

"What is it you want?" she said. "We have nothing."

Elisha understood her dialect. He went to her and said, "I would like a drink of water."

"We have none," she replied. "We have nothing to give. Go your way."

When Elisha asked, "Is there no one to care for this woman?" she replied: "No, there is no one. Our

man is dying in the yard, and we are dying here."

The boy had become quiet at the sight of the stranger, but when the old woman began to talk, he broke out anew. "Give me some bread, gran'ma," he cried, pulling her by the sleeve.

As Elisha was about to question the old woman, the man appeared in the doorway and clinging to the wall; as he approached he made an attempt to sit down on the bench, but being unable to reach it, he fell on the door-sill and made no effort to rise. He spoke slowly and disconnectedly:

"Disease . . . . and hunger. Ossia

A GIRL CAME OUT FROM BEHIND THE OVEN.

p 121

is dying of hunger," he said, pointing to the boy, and burst into tears.

Reaching the bag that was slung across his shoulder, Elisha took it off and placed it on the floor. Unfastening it he took out a loaf of bread, cut a slice, and handed it to the peasant, who shook his head, pointing to the boy and girl, as much as to say, "Give it to them." Elisha handed it to the boy, who seized the slice and ravenously devoured it. A girl had come out from behind the oven, staring at the bread; Elisha gave her a slice. Then he cut off a third slice and gave it to the old woman. She took it and began to eat.

"It would be well to give them some water; their throats are parched. I started to fetch some . . . . I don't seem to remember when it was . . . . yesterday or to-day . . . . but I could not get there . . . . I fell, and the pail must be there still, if no one has taken it."

Elisha asked the old woman where the well was, and she told him. He went out, found the pail, drew the water and gave them to drink. The children and the old woman ate the bread and drank the water, but the man refused. "It goes against me," he said. The young woman seemed still unconscious; she did not move.

Elisha then went to the shop, and there he bought meal, salt, flour and butter, and finding a hatchet, he chopped some wood and lighted a fire, the girl helping him; after which he made a thin mush or broth, and fed them.

V.

THE peasant could eat the broth, and the old woman supped it also. As for the boy and girl, they licked the bowl clean, and went to sleep in each other's arms. Then the peasant and the old woman told him how all this had come about.

"We never were well-to-do, and last year the crops failed altogether," said the peasant. "Last autumn we had spent all we had. At first we used to borrow of the neighbors, and they

helped us; but at last they also refused. Some would have been glad to give, but had nothing themselves. Besides, we were ashamed to keep on begging, for we owed every one — money, as well as flour and bread. I looked for work, but there was none to be had. Nowadays everybody is glad to earn his food. Some days I got work, then again I could find none for two or three days at a time. The old woman and the girl went begging away from home, but they got almost nothing. Everybody went hungry. Still we kept along for a while, and hoped to pull through till the new crops were ready. But with spring the aid ceased

altogether, and then sickness came . . . . These are hard times! Some days we manage to get something to eat, then again we have to go without food for several days. We have lived on herbs, and maybe that has caused my wife to fall sick. My strength is also gone, and we do not hope to get better," he added.

"I kept up longer than the rest," said the old woman, "but without food I begin to feel very weak. The girl, too, has grown faint and timid. We tried to send her to the neighbors, but she would not go. She stays in one corner and we can't get her out of it. A neighbor looked in here the other

day, but seeing us hungry and ill, she turned on her heel and left. Her husband is away, and she has nothing to feed her children with. So here we are, waiting for death."

Elisha listened to their stories, and made up his mind to put off joining his comrade that day. The next morning he did the work in the house as though he had been its master. He built a fire, helped the old woman to make bread, and then with the girl went to the neighbors to get for them the things most needed. Wherever he asked, no one had anything — everything had been used up. They had neither food nor clothing.

Elisha helped his hosts in every way. Some things he made for them himself, and many others he bought. And thus he remained there three days. The little boy improved, and began to walk about, making friends with Elisha; the girl brightened up also, and followed him wherever he went, calling him grandpa; the old woman grew strong enough to make a call on her neighbors. The peasant himself could walk now, holding on by the wall. The young woman alone showed no sign of improvement. But on the third day of his visit she became conscious and asked for something to eat.

"Well, I did not expect to lose so much time," thought Elisha. "Now I must surely start on."

VI.

On this day the summer fast came to an end. "I had better stay through the day and buy them something for the holiday," he thought; "then I can start in the evening."

Going to the village he bought bread, pork, and flour, and helped the woman cook, and after church he shared their meal. On the same day the young woman rose and was able to sit up. The man shaved, put on a clean shirt, which the old woman had washed

for him, and went to a rich peasant in the village to ask of him a favor. Both his rye and hay fields were mortgaged to this peasant, and he went to see whether he would not let him have the use of them till the new crops were ready. He returned sad and disheartened. The peasant had refused his request, bidding him bring the money. Elisha thought this matter over. How are they to get along now? The peasants will be haying, and these folk have nothing, for their field is mortgaged. When the rye ripens and the neighbors are reaping, and a good harvest it will be too, they will have nothing to expect. Their dessiatin is

sold to the rich peasant. "When I go away they will be as poor as ever." He went on thinking the matter over, and put off his departure till the next morning. At night, after saying his prayers, he lay down in the yard, but could not sleep.

He thought that he ought to go, for he had already spent much both in time and money, still he did not see how he could leave them, for he pitied them.

"It is impossible to help everybody," he thought.

At first he had given each of them a slice of bread, and a draught of water, then he began to cook for them, and

from that time had gone on helping them more and more. Now he asked himself whether he should raise their mortgage; if he did so, a cow must be bought to supply the children with milk, and a horse to enable the peasant to harvest his crops. "You are in for it, friend Elisha," he thought; "you have spread your sails, and now you must do your best."

He rose, removed his caftan from under his head, drew out his snuff-box, took a pinch of snuff to clear his thoughts, but all in vain. No other solution presented itself. This was the problem: he would like to go, and still he pitied the peasants, and could

not decide what to do. He rolled up the caftan, put it back under his head, and stretched himself out once more. So he lay till dawn, and heard the roosters crow. Then falling into a doze he dreamed that he was dressed for the journey, with a bag over his shoulder and a staff in hand, and that he had to pass through a gate open just wide enough for him to slip his body through. As he was about to pass, the bag caught on one side, and while he was endeavoring to extricate himself, his ankle-cloth caught on the other side, and became loosened in his struggle.

As he tried to free himself, he per-

ceived that he had not been held by the gate; it was the little girl who was clinging to him, calling him grandpa and asking for bread; and as he glanced at his foot he saw the boy clasping it, while the man and the old woman looked out of the window. He woke and said to himself: "To-morrow I will take up the mortgage on the meadow and the rye-field, and I will buy them a horse, and bread enough to last till the coming harvest; also a cow for the children. I started to look for Christ beyond the sea, but I must take care to keep him with me in my heart. I must help them." And he slept soundly till morning.

Waking at last, while it was still early, he went to the rich peasant, and raised the mortgage of the rye-field and the meadow; on his way back he bought a scythe — for even that had been sold — and carried it to the house, then sent the peasant to mow, while he went himself on his errands to the neighbors. He found a horse and cart for sale at the pot-house, and after agreeing on the price he bought them. He also ordered a bag of flour, and having deposited it on the cart, he went to buy a cow. On his way he overtook two women and heard their conversation; although he could not make it all out, he understood enough

to know that they were talking about him.

"They did not think much of him at first, for he looked like an ordinary man, who had only stepped in to get a drink of water. How many things he has bought for them! I saw him this very day buying a horse and a cart for them from the pot-house keeper. I must say, there are few such people in the world!"

Hearing this Elisha understood that they were praising him, and did not buy the cow. He went back to the pot-house, paid the keeper for the horse, and harnessing it, returned to the hut.

When the family saw him stop at the gate, they did not know what to say to him, for although they guessed that the horse was for them, they did not dare to say so.

The master of the house came to open the gate. "Where did you get your horse, gran'pa?"

"I bought it; it was sold cheap; mow some grass and put it in the manger for the horse to eat at night, and take that bag off."

The peasant unharnessed the horse, carried the bag into the shed, mowed some grass, and put it in the manger. Then, when all the family had gone to bed, Elisha lay down out of doors,

placing his bag beside him. After all were asleep, he rose, girded on his garments, took up his bag and resumed his journey.

VII.

When he had walked some five versts he saw that it had grown lighter; seating himself under a tree, he untied his bag, counted his money and found that he had only seventeen roubles and twenty copecks left. "This will not take me across the water," he thought, "and it will not do to beg. Yefim will have to go alone and pray for me. It seems as if I might die without fulfilling my vow. It is a blessing that the Master is merciful; He will wait."

He rose, and shouldering his bag, turned his steps homeward. When he reached the village where he had been staying with the poor family, he went around it, so as not to be seen by any of the people, and ere long reached his home. His outward journey had seemed hard to him; at times he had scarcely been able to follow Yefîm. Now God gave him strength, and he felt but slight fatigue. He walked briskly, swinging his staff and sometimes making seventy versts in a day.

When Elisha reached home, the field labors were over. His family were pleased to see him so soon returned. They asked him why he had not made

the journey, if he had lost his comrade, and why he had come back alone? Elisha did not give them any particulars.

"It was not my fate to do it," he said. "I lost my money and got separated from my comrade, so I concluded to give it up. Forgive me, for Christ's sake!"

He gave back the old woman's money and questioned his people about the household matters. All had gone well, everything was done thoroughly, and they were living in peace and concord.

Yefîm's people hearing of his return, came to ask him about their old man.

Elisha replied that he was well, and was travelling steadily. "We parted three days before Saint Peter's day," he said. "I intended to overtake him, but things have happened to prevent me. I lost some of my money, and had not enough left to continue my journey, so I have returned."

People wondered, and there was much talk, — how so clever a man could have done so foolish a thing, starting on a journey and then giving it up — and how he had probably wasted his money. But soon this was forgotten. Even Elisha himself forgot it. He went about the place as usual, helping his son to do the work

and store the wood for the winter, and the women to thrash the grain. He roofed the barns, took care of the bees and gave the ten hives with their increase to the neighbor who had bought them. His old woman wanted to hide the increase from the hives that were sold, but Elisha himself knew the swarming, and he gave to his neighbor seventeen hives, instead of ten. After he had seen to everything and had sent his son away to work, he settled down for the winter, to plait bast shoes and scoop out lasts.

VIII.

ALL that day, while Elisha was in the hut with the suffering peasants, Yefîm expected him. He walked but a short distance after his companion left him, and then sat down to wait. Becoming drowsy, he finally fell asleep, and when he awoke he continued to wait, but Elisha did not appear.

"He may have passed me," he thought, "or some one has very likely given him a lift, and he did not notice me while I was sleeping. And yet

how could he have missed me? Everything is distinctly seen on the steppe. If I go back, he may go ahead; it will be worse if we should happen to miss each other in that way. I better keep on; we shall probably meet at night."

Coming to the next village, he asked the Elder if such an old man came, to have him sent to the same hut as himself. But Elisha did not come that night. So Yefîm started the next morning, inquiring of every one if they had seen a baldheaded old man. But no one had seen him. "We shall meet somewhere in Odessa or on board the ship," he thought, and dismissed the subject from his mind.

On the way he became acquainted with a pilgrim, a long-haired man who wore a skull-cap and under cassock; he had been to Mount Athos, and was making his second trip to Jerusalem. Meeting at a resting-place at night, they had a chat, and afterward travelled together.

They reached Odessa in safety, where, amid a crowd of other pilgrims, from all parts of the world, they had to wait for the ship. Yefîm asked everybody whether they had seen Elisha, but no one had seen him. Yefîm had had his foreign passport examined, which cost him five roubles; he paid forty roubles for his fare on the ship to

Jerusalem and back, and bought some bread and herrings for the journey.

After the ship had taken in its freight the passengers went on board, Tarà-sitch with the travelled pilgrim among the rest. The anchor was lifted, and they set sail. The first day was fair; at night, however, the wind rose, it began to rain and the sea grew rough, washing over the deck. The passengers were much frightened; women screamed, and many ran about seeking for shelter. Yefìm, too, was frightened, but he concealed his fear and remained sitting on the same spot where he had taken his place, on coming aboard, beside some Tambòv peo-

ple, and thus he remained all the following day and night. They did not talk, but sat firmly gripping their bags. The third day the sea grew calmer, and on the fifth they reached Constantinople.

Some of the passengers landed and visited the church of Saint Sophia, now held by the Turks, but Taràsitch stayed on the ship, and only bought some white bread. They remained here twenty-four hours, before they sailed again; stopping at Smyrna and Alexandria, they finally reached their landing place, Jaffa, in safety. They were still seventy versts from Jerusalem.

At the landing, the crowd of pilgrims was greatly frightened. The sides of the ship were high and the passengers were tossed into the boats, which swayed to and fro under its side. As likely as not they might fall in the water; in fact, two of them did so, but were rescued.

Then the pilgrims set forth, and on the third day, towards noon, reached Jerusalem. Yefîm and his companion stopped outside of the city walls, at the Russian church inn, had their passes revised, ate their meal, and then visited the different holy places. On that day there was no admittance to the sepulchre of Christ. They visited the mon-

astery of the Patriarchs, and there were seated with other pilgrims in a circle on the floor — men and women separately — and told to take off their shoes. A monk came out with a towel, washed their feet, then wiped and kissed them. They attended the vespers and matins, prayed, offered candles, and handed in the names of their relatives for prayers. Then they were fed, and wine was passed to them. Next morning they visited the cell of Mary of Egypt. There, too, they bought candles and paid for a Te Deum. Thence they went to Abraham's monastery, to the garden of Jehovah-jireh, where Abraham was

about to sacrifice his son, and afterwards to the spot where Christ appeared to Mary Magdalen, and to the Church of James, the Lord's brother. All these places the pilgrim pointed out to Yefîm and instructed him concerning the money to be given everywhere.

Towards dinner-time they returned to their inn; after dining, when they were about to go to bed, the pilgrim suddenly complained of the loss of his money, and began searching for it in his clothes.

"They have stolen my purse containing twenty-three roubles," he said; "I had two ten rouble bills and three

roubles in change." He seemed much distressed and grieved over his loss, but there was no help for it, and they finally fell asleep.

IX.

WHILE Yefîm was lying awake, temptation beset him. "I doubt if any one has stolen his money," he thought; "he did not have any. He did not give anywhere; he only told me to give; he even borrowed a rouble of me." Thus ran his thoughts. Then again he would reproach himself. "Why do I judge this man? I am sinning. I will think of it no more."

But very soon he would find himself thinking about it again: how the pil-

grim had watched his money, and how unlikely it was that one's pocket-book should be stolen. Yefîm was sure that his comrade had no money, and that this was all make-believe.

When they rose to go to early mass in the temple of the Resurrection — the Lord's sepulchre — the pilgrim still followed Yefîm, and went about with him everywhere. On reaching the Temple they found a great many worshippers of different nationalities there — Russians, Greeks, Armenians, Turks, and Syrians.

Guided by the monk, and following the crowd, Yefîm passed the Holy Gate and the Turkish sentries, to the

spot where Christ's body was taken from the cross and anointed, and where now nine candles burn, and he himself placed one there. Much was told him, and he was shown many things.

Later he was led by the monks towards the right up a staircase to the hill of Golgotha, where the cross had been planted, and there he prayed. Then he was shown the rent in the earth, where it had opened, and the spots where the nails were driven into Christ's hands and feet; he was shown the grave of Adam, where Christ had shed his blood on Adam's bones. They led him to the stone where Christ had sat when the crown of thorns was

placed on his brow; he saw the post to which he was tied when he was scourged, and the stone with the two holes made for his feet.

He was to see something else, but there was a sudden flurry, and all hastened to the cave of the Lord's sepulchre. The foreign mass was over, and the Orthodox mass was about to begin. Yefim went with the people into the cave. He was anxious to get rid of the pilgrim, for he still sinned against him in thought, but the latter followed him everywhere — to the mass, and to the Lord's sepulchre. They tried to go nearer the altar, but missed their chance. The

crowd was so dense, that they could not move either forward or backward. Yefîm stood praying, and occasionally feeling for his money-bag. His mind was restless: he still thought that the pilgrim had deceived him; but even if this were not the case, and the money had really been stolen from him, the same thing might happen to himself.

X.

THUS he stood praying, looking forward into the chapel where the tomb stood with its thirty-six lamps burning over it. Suddenly, while he was peering before him, he was amazed to see under the very shrine where the sacred fire was burning, and in front of all the rest of the people, an old man in a gray caftan, and baldheaded, like Elisha Bodròv.

"He looks like Elisha, but it cannot be he. He could not possibly have

arrived here before me. The earlier ship sailed a week before ours. He could not have sailed then, and he was not on our ship, for I saw all the pilgrims."

As these thoughts passed through his mind, he saw the old man pray and bow, first to the Lord, and then to the Orthodox Christians on all three sides. When he turned to the right, Yefîm recognized him. That was Elisha Bodròv himself; his black and curly beard, somewhat gray on the side, his eyebrows, his eyes, and nose—Elisha Bodròv himself, undoubtedly!

Yefîm was glad that he had found his comrade, and surprised to find that

he had arrived before him. "Good for Bodròv," he thought; "how is it he has managed to rush ahead so? It must be that he found some one who brought him there. When I go out I will look for him; then I shall leave my pilgrim and hold on to Bodròv. Perhaps he will find a place for me in front."

Meanwhile he was anxious not to lose sight of Elisha. When the mass was over, and the people began to move, surging forward to kiss the relics, Yefìm was pushed aside, and again feared lest he might lose his money-bag. He held on to it with one hand and tried to get clear of the

crowd. When he had done so, he looked for Elisha and wandered a long time searching for him both inside and outside of the temple.

A great many people were there, some eating and drinking, others sleeping and reading. But Elisha was nowhere to be seen. Yefìm returned to the inn without finding his comrade. The pilgrim had also disappeared that same evening, together with the rouble that Yefìm had lent him.

The next day the latter returned to the Lord's sepulchre accompanied by the Tambòv peasant whom he had met on shipboard. He wanted to push forward, but was crowded back,

so he leaned against a pillar and began to pray.

As he looked forward, there again under the lights, beside the very sepulchre of the Lord, stood Elisha, his arms extended in the attitude of priests at the altar, and his bald head shining. "Now," thought Yefîm, "surely I cannot miss him." And he started resolutely for the front, but when he got there Elisha was gone.

And again, for the third time, he saw Elisha standing in full sight, on the most sacred spot, with arms extended, looking upwards, as though he gazed at something overhead, his bald head shining more than ever.

"Now," thought Yefim, "I will not miss him; I will watch for him at the entrance. He cannot pass me there."

He went out, and stood at the entrance for a long time—a whole half-day. All the people went away, but Elisha was not there.

He remained in Jerusalem six weeks and visited other places of interest: he went to Bethlehem, to Bethany, to the Jordan, and beside the Lord's sepulchre had a seal put on a new shirt, that he might be buried in it; filled a flask with water from the Jordan, took some earth and candles with the sacred flame, and had his relatives' names

written down for prayers in eight different places. Now his money being mostly spent, he was obliged to think of going home, so he started on his way back. Embarking at Jaffa, he sailed for Odessa, and thence tramped home.

XI.

YEFIM returned by the same route that he had come. As he drew near his home, again he became anxious about his people, wondering how they were living without him. Many changes may happen in a year. It may take the savings of a life-time to build a house, but it is easy enough to destroy it. He wondered how his son had managed his affairs without him, how the spring had opened, how the cattle had fared in the winter, and how the hut had been finished.

On reaching the spot where he parted with Elisha last year, he did not recognize the people that he had seen then. Where last year he saw them needy, they were now living in plenty. The harvest had been a good one, and people having improved their condition had forgotten their former misery. One evening Yefîm drew near the very village where he had parted from Elisha. As he entered it, a half-clad girl ran out of the hut.

"Here, gran'pa, come this way!"

He was about to pass on, but she caught him by the edge of his caftan, laughing, and dragged him into the hut. In the porch stood a woman

with a boy beside her; they also beckoned to him.

"Come and have supper with us, gran'pa, and spend the night."

Yefìm went in. "By the way," he thought, "I will ask about Elisha. I believe this was the very hut where he stopped to get a drink of water."

When he entered, the woman took his bag, gave him water to wash himself, and after seating him at the table, she served milk, varènniki * and gruel. Taràsitch thanked them and praised them for their hospitality.

The woman shook her head depre-

* A dish of Little Russia, made of sour milk, cheese and dough.

catingly. "We could not do otherwise," she said. "Once we were helped by a stranger. We lived and forgot God, and the Lord punished us, so that death stared us in the face. Last summer we were so reduced that we had nothing to eat, and were ill; we should have certainly died if God had not sent us an old man, like yourself. He came one day to get a drink of water, but when he saw us, he pitied us, and remained with us. He fed and helped us, he raised the mortgage on our land, and bought us a horse and cart."

An old woman entered the hut and interrupted the speaker. "We cannot

tell whether it was a man or an angel. He loved and pitied us all, but he went away without saying good-by; and we do not know for whom to pray. I still see it all before me: I was sitting waiting for death to come, when a baldheaded old man came in, quite simple-looking, and asked for a drink of water. I remember I asked myself, What business has he here? And see what he has done! As soon as he saw us, he took off his bag and placed it there."

"No, gran'ma," interrupted the little girl, "he put it, in the first place, in the middle of the floor, and afterwards he put it on the bench."

And so they disputed about it and related all his words and deeds, where he sat and slept, and what he did and said. Later, the master arrived in the cart, and he also told about Elisha, and how he had lived with them.

"If he had not come we should have all died, steeped in our sins. We were dying in despair, murmuring against the Lord and mankind. He helped us and taught us to know God and to trust human kindness. May the Lord bless him! We lived like beasts, he made us men."

They feasted Yefîm, put him to bed, and then retired themselves. And as he lay there he could not help thinking

of Elisha, remembering that he had seen him three times in Jerusalem in the same place nearest the Altar.

"That is why he had a place before me," he thought. "Whether my offering is received or not, no one knows, but the Lord has received his."

The next morning Yefim bade his hosts good-by. They gave him pies enough to last him on the way, then, as they set forth to their daily labor, he continued his journey.

XII.

YEFIM had been absent just one year. He returned home in the spring.

Reaching his house at night, he did not find his son at home. He was at the pot-house, and when he returned later he was tipsy. Yefim began to question him, and saw at once that he had been improvident — had squandered the money and neglected his business. When his father reprimanded him, he answered angrily,

"Why didn't you stay here yourself

and attend to matters? You went away and took plenty of money, and now you find fault with me!"

Growing angry, the old man gave his son a thrashing. The next morning, starting to visit the Stàrosta to talk to him about his troubles, he passed Elisha's house and saw the old woman standing on the porch. She greeted him pleasantly.

"Good day to you," she said. "How did you make your journey?"

Yefìm Taràsitch stopped. "I thank the Lord," he said, "I made it in safety, but I missed your old man. I hear he has come home."

The old woman was a great talker,

and this started her nimble tongue. "Yes, indeed, he is at home again, my good friend. He came back long ago, shortly after the Fall Fast. I cannot begin to tell you how glad we were to see him, for we had missed him very much. Of course he cannot work hard, for he is getting along in years; still he is the head of the house, and we want him with us. Our son was also very glad. He said he longed for him as for the sunlight. Yes, we missed him greatly, for we love him dearly, and take good care of him."

"Is he at home now?"

"Yes, indeed, he is; he is taking care of the bees. He says there will

be a rich swarm, such a one as he never remembers. He thinks God is too merciful to us. Come in; I know that he will be glad to see you."

Yefîm passed into the porch and through the yard to the apiary where Elisha was. As he entered it, he saw him standing there under the birch tree without either net or mittens, dressed in a gray caftan, with his arms stretched and looking upwards, his bald head shining just as Yefîm had seen it in Jerusalem; and above him as then, the sun was shining through the birch tree. Around his head the golden bees had formed a halo, but they did not sting him. Yefîm stopped.

YEFIM STOPPED AS HE SAW ELISHA.

p 176

The old woman called to Elisha.

"Your friend is here," she said.

Elisha looked back, glad to see him. He came forward, gently picking off the bees from his beard.

"How do you do, my dear fellow? how did you make your journey?"

"My feet made it. I have brought you some water from the Jordan; you must come and get it. I don't know whether the Lord accepted my vow"—

"Thank God that you have been. May the Lord bless you."

Yefîm was silent.

"My feet went, but whether my soul was there or not, I cannot say."

"It is all in God's will!"

"I stopped on my way back at the hut where you left me . . . . "

Elisha looked disturbed; he said hurriedly,

"It is all in God's will — all in His will! Come into the hut and I will bring you some honey."

He evidently wished to avoid the subject, and began to talk about domestic matters.

Yefìm sighed, and said no more, either about the family at the hut or what he had seen in Jerusalem. He understood that God ordains that every one shall fulfil his duty in the world through love and good deeds.

ILLYÀS.

In the government of Oofà lived a Bashkir called Illyàs. He had just married when his father died, leaving him a very small property — seven mares, two cows and twenty sheep. But Illyàs was thrifty and increased his patrimony; he worked with his wife from morning till night, rising earlier and retiring later than his neighbors, and adding every year to his property. Thus he worked for

thirty-five years, and became very wealthy.

Now he owned two hundred horses, one hundred and fifty head of cattle and twelve hundred sheep. His workmen watched the herds and flocks, and women milked the mares and cows, making koumiss,* butter and cheese.

Illyàs had plenty of everything, and his neighbors envied him. "He is a lucky man," they said, "he has abundance of everything; he must enjoy life." People of good standing made his acquaintance and came from a distance to visit him. He welcomed and entertained every one, treating them

* A beverage made of fermented mare's milk.

with tea, koumiss and mutton. Whenever he had a guest a sheep was killed, or if his visitors were more numerous, a mare.

He had two sons and one daughter, all of them married. When he was poor his sons helped him in the care of the herds and flocks, but since he had grown rich, they had become wild, and one of them was intemperate. The oldest had been killed in a brawl, and the youngest had married a high-spirited woman, and wished to have his share of the property set apart for him, not choosing to remain any longer under his father's control.

Illyàs granted his wish and gave

him a house and cattle, by this means reducing his own property. Shortly afterwards a disease broke out among the sheep, and he lost a great many. The following year was a disastrous one — the hay-crop failed, and a number of cattle perished in the winter. Then his horses were stolen by the Kirghis, so his property became still more reduced, and he went from bad to worse. His strength also failed, and at the age of seventy he found himself obliged to sell his pelisses, carpets, saddles and kibitkas;* then he disposed of the remaining cattle, and finally had nothing left. It had all

* Covered cart used in the Ural district.

come about so gradually that he was hardly aware of it, until one day he found it necessary to hire himself out to work with his wife.

All that was left him were the clothes he wore, one hat, one pelisse, his foot-gear and his old wife — Sham-shemaghì. His son lived far away, his daughter was dead, and there was no one to help the old couple.

Mahomet-shah, their neighbor, pitied them. Mahomet-shah was neither poor nor rich, lived moderately, and was a good man. He remembered kindly Illyàs's hospitality, and said to him: "You and your old woman had better come and live with me; you shall work

in the summer-time on my melon patches, and in the winter take care of the cattle, and Sham-shemaghì shall milk the cows and make koumiss. I will take care of you, and will supply your wants."

Illyàs thanked his neighbor and settled down as his workman, with his wife to help him. It seemed hard at first, but soon the old people became used to it, and worked according to their ability.

Their master was pleased with them, for, having been owners themselves, they knew what ought to be done, and did their best. Often Mahomet-shah pitied them, and felt sorry to think

that people of such high standing were so reduced. One day Mahomet-shah happening to have some guests, and a Mollah * among them, Illyàs was ordered to kill, dress, and boil a sheep, and to serve it to the company. Having feasted on the mutton, they drank tea and koumiss. As they were sitting with their host on down pillows and carpets, drinking the tea and koumiss and talking, they saw Illyàs pass the door. He had just finished his work. Perceiving him Mahomet-shah said to his guest:

"Did you see that man?"

"I did, what about him?"

* A Mahommedan priest.

"At one time he was the richest man here; you have probably heard of him. His name is Illyàs."

"Indeed, I have," replied the guest. "I never saw him before, but he is known far and wide."

"At present he is not worth anything. He works for me and his wife milks the mares."

The guest shook his head in surprise. "Luck is like unto a wheel," he said, "it raises some and lowers others. I dare say he feels bad."

"I do not know; he lives quietly and works well."

"May I talk with him and ask him about his life?" inquired the guest.

"Certainly," replied the host, and called Illyàs.

"Come in here with your wife, and have some koumiss with us, gran'pa."

They came in. Greeting the host and guests, Illyàs said a prayer and squatted by the door; his wife joined her mistress behind the curtain.

Illyàs was treated with koumiss. Making a bow to the host and guests, he sipped the wine, then set it down and waited.

"I suppose you feel bad, gran'pa, when you think of your former life," remarked the guest. "When you remember how well you lived and how poor you are now."

Illyàs smiled and replied:

"Were I to tell you of my happiness and unhappiness, you would not believe me; you had better inquire of my old woman. She will tell you, womanlike, all she feels; the whole truth, in fact."

The guest addressed her behind the curtain:

"Tell us, gran'ma, how you feel about your former happiness and your present misfortune?"

And Sham-shemaghì replied from behind the curtain:

"What I have to say is only this: my old man and myself have lived fifty years vainly seeking for happi-

ness. Since we lost everything two years ago and have been working for others, we have found true happiness, and we are content."

Both master and guests were surprised. The former rose, and lifting the curtain he looked at the old woman as she stood with folded hands, smiling at her old man, who smiled in response.

"Indeed I am in earnest," she continued. "For half a century we have looked for happiness, and so long as we were rich, we did not find it; now that we have lost all and are living in service, we have found perfect happiness."

"What do you mean by perfect happiness?"

"I will tell you: formerly when we were rich, we had so many cares that we had not an hour's peace; no time to pray, or talk, or think about our souls. First, it was company, and we were anxious to entertain them well, and to give them presents, in order to gain their respect; then when the company left, we had to look after our workmen to see that they did not waste their time or their food; therein we sinned. Then again we felt anxious lest a wolf should carry off a colt or a calf, or thieves drive away our horses. We never slept well, worry-

ing lest the sheep might injure the lambs, and frequently rose in the night to see if things were all right. When these anxieties were not upon our minds, there still remained the care of providing food for the cattle in winter. And moreover, we did not agree. For instance, when my husband would say, 'This had better be done so,' I often replied, 'No, I think this is the better way,' and we frequently disputed. Thus we lived in sin and trouble, and did not know what it was to be happy."

"And how is it now?"

"Now, as we rise in the morning, we often chat together; we have noth-